

THE USE OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract

In translation, not only two languages but two cultures come into contact which means that translators must consider *who* wrote the text, *when*, *why*, *for whom* and *who* is now reading it and for *what* purpose. In the wake of rapid technological advances and the need to spread information quickly and efficiently, translation has grown in importance in the globalized world. So has its reliance on English in its role as a global lingua franca. English is often being used for ‘interculturalizing’ native languages but it is also true that English texts are written by speakers who use English as a lingua franca (ELF) with the additional consequence of local languages being incorporated into the texts. This is the linguistic hybridity used in constructing a wider view of the world. However, the prime aim of any lingua franca communication is mutual intelligibility. Saussure wrote about the contrasting principles of *provincialism* (*esprit de clocher*) and what he termed *intercourse*: the need for broader communication. We can see Saussure’s principles as two imperatives: the *cooperative* and *territorial imperatives*. That is to say that language change is brought about by the ‘cooperative imperative’ as we need to continually modify our language in order to communicate with other people. At the same time, there is the ‘territorial imperative’ to secure and protect our own space and sustain our separate social and individual identity. In this study, the translation of linguistic units can only be understood when considered together with the cultural contexts in which they arise, and in which they are used. Blogging in Singapore and the Philippines is part of the ‘cooperative and territorial imperatives’ where the use of English as a lingua franca is intertwined with translanguaging.

Keywords: EFL, translation, cooperative and territorial imperatives, translanguaging, blogging, Singapore, Philippines.

Translation can be defined as the result of a procedure in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language. Translation, however, is subject to a variety of extra-linguistic factors and conditions and this is what makes translation such a complex phenomenon. Translation is therefore not only a linguistic act but an act of communication across cultures (Nida, 1964). As language is culturally embedded: it serves to express and help shape cultural reality. In translation, therefore, not only two languages but two cultures invariably come into contact. In this sense translation is a form of intercultural communication; where the translator must consider the immediate ‘context of situation’. This more local situational context has to do with questions about *who* wrote the text, *when*, *why*, *for whom* and *who* is now reading it and for *what* purpose. These questions, in turn, are reflected in how a text is written, interpreted, read and used. Exploring text in context is the only way of exploring text for the purposes of translation as re-contextualized texts travel across time and space (House 2012, 2015).

In the wake of rapid technological advances and the need to spread information quickly and efficiently, translation has grown in importance in the globalized world. So has its reliance on English in its role as a global lingua franca. An important

area in the study of globalized intercultural discourse concerns computer mediated communication and internet domains. Consequently, there is an influx of words in the discourse on the internet which may be English or from other languages that fill a lexical gap and are placed to achieve certain effects. It is true that the English language is often being used for ‘interculturalizing’ native languages but it is also true that English texts are written by speakers who use English as a lingua franca (ELF) with the additional consequence of local languages being incorporated into the texts. This is the linguistic hybridity used in constructing a wider view of the world. However, it is not only this ‘interculturalization’ that is involved but since the prime aim of any lingua franca communication is mutual intelligibility, correctness in terms of formal ‘native speaker’ discourse tends not to be such an absolute criterion (Cogo and Dewey 2012:59). Culturally embedded linguistic forms such as idioms with routinized phrases associated with cultural-historical references may be very difficult to translate in the target language. Thus an advantage of ELF is the spread across many different linguistic, geographical and cultural areas, as well as the readiness with which linguistic terms from different languages are and have been integrated into the English language (Firth 2009). To add to